

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 CU-05 DRC-01 /107 W

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R 011700Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5723

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: CENTER UNION TO SEEK POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS

1.SUMMARY: ATHENS PRESS GAVE PRIORITY TREATMENT OCTOBER 1 TO REPORT THAT CENTER UNION INTENDS TO SEEK POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS TO PERMIT MORE ADEQUATE PREPARATIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS IN ELECTORAL PROCEDURES. GOVERNMENT SOURCES QUOTED AS SAYING NATIONAL INTERESTS REQUIRED ELECTIONS BE HELD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. PRESENT EXPECTATION IS THAT CABINET ON OCT. 3 IS EXPECTED TO ANNOUNCE DATE OF ELECTIONS, AND LIFTING OF MARTIAL LAW AND TO RESOLVE ISSUE OF SERVICE (CARETAKER) GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. ATHENS NEWSPAPERS GAVE FRONTPAGE TREATMENT TO REPORT THAT CENTER UNION SEEKS ELECTION POSTPONEMENT. TO VIMA WROTE CU REQUEST WAS BASED ON NEED FOR MORE THOROUGH PREPARATIONS BEFORE ELECTIONS AND FOR FURTHER REVISION IN ELECTORAL PROCEDURES. SAME NEWSPAPER REPORTED CU AND OTHER PARTIES NEEDED ADDITIONAL TIME TO ORGANIZE AND REMARKED THAT CU WAS DISADVANTAGED IN THAT PARTY LEADER GEORGE MAVROS IN CAPACITY AS FOREIGN MINISTER HAD DEVOTED NEARLY ALL HIS TIME AND EFFORTS TO NATIONAL CRISIS OF CYPRUS. REVISIONS IN ELECTORAL PROCEDURE RECOMMENDED ARE CONCERNED WITH TECHNIQUE FOR SECOND DISTRIBUTION OF VOTES
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IN REINFORCED PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM AND WITH

POLLING STATIONS FOR MILITARY SINCE WITH MOBILIZATION MANY ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL WILL VOTE AWAY FROM HOME DISTRICTS. ESTIA REPORTED THAT FM MAVROS TELEPHONED PREMIER CARAMANLIS SEPT. 30 TO MAKE SPECIAL PLEA FOR 2 OR 3 WEEK DELAY IN ELECTIONS DATE.

3. BY WAY OF RESPONDING TO CENTER UNION APPEAL FOR DELAY WHICH NOW INCLUDES ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES (CU, PASOK, SOCIALIST MOVEMENT, AND LEFT/ COMMUNIST), GOVERNMENT SOURCES ARE NOW QUOTED AS REAFFIRMING PM'S DESIRE FOR EARLY ELECTIONS. EMBASSY IS INFORMED, HOWEVER, BY GOVERNMENT PRESS SOURCE THAT CARAMANLIS MAY IN FACT AGREE TO POSTPONE ELECTION DATE UNTIL NOVEMBER 24 AS "CONCESSION" TO OPPOSITION.

4. ALL NEWSPAPERS REPORT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING SCHEDULED OCTOBER 3 WHEN DECISIONS ARE EXPECTED ON DATE OF ELECTIONS, GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION, LIFTING OF MARTIAL LAW, AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS. CABINET MEETING WAS DELAYED TO PERMIT DEPUTY PM AND FM MAVROS, WHO IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN FROM NEW YORK OCTOBER 2, TO ATTEND. OCTOBER 3 CABINET MEETING IS EXPECTED TO DEAL ALSO WITH QUESTION OF CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD ALLOW PRESENT MINISTERS TO RESIGN TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS. MINISTERS OF DEFENSE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND PM WOULD RETAIN POSITIONS.

5. CHARTER OF "NEW DEMOCRACY" WAS PUBLISHED OCTOBER 1. CHARTER WHICH IS FIRST OF ITS KIND IN GREEK POLITICAL HISTORY IS ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENT DEALING WITH ADMINISTRATION, FINANCES, PERSONNEL, ETC. "NEW DEMOCRACY" SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT POLITICAL PROGRAM FOR EACH ELECTORAL REGION WILL BE CONTAINED IN PARTY PLATFORM TO BE ANNOUNCED BY PM CARAMANLIS DURING CAMPAIGN.

6. MINISTER OF INTERIOR STRATOS ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 1 THAT OVERSEAS GREEKS WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO VOTE, I.E. FOLLOWING PAST PRACTICE THERE WILL BE NO ABSENTEE BALLOTS. STRATOS TERMED THIS A SHORTCOMING AND SAID MINISTRY WOULD REVIEW ELECTORAL PROCEDURES WITH OBJECTIVE OF CORRECTING SITUATION FOR FUTURE. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ATHENAIKI REPORTED THAT NEARLY 1,000,000 GREEK YOUTH WHO CAME OF VOTING AGE BETWEEN 1967 AND 1974 ARE NOT REGISTERED. (THIS FIGURE IS PROBABLY EXAGGERATED BUT MANY YOUTH APPARENTLY DID NOT REGISTER DURING MILITARY REGIME PERIOD AS PROTEST. THIS WOULD PRESUMABLY BE TO ADVANTAGE OF "NEW DEMOCRACY" SINCE MOST YOUTH AND STUDENTS IN CITIES ARE BELIEVED TO FAVOR LEFT OF CENTER UNION.)

7. UNDERSCORING POPULAR DEMAND FOR JUNTA TO BE PUNISHED,
CENTER UNION YOUTH (EDIN) ELECTED AS SECRETARY GENERAL
EX-PRESIDENT PAPADOPOULOS' WOULD -BE-ASSASIN, ALEXANDROS
PANAGHOULIS. HIS RECORD, ASIDE FROM ATTEMPTED MURDER, IS LESS
DAMNING THAN THAT OF HIS BROTHER STATHIS WHO HAS BEEN CHARGED
WITH PETTY THEFT, AVOIDING MILITARY SERVICE, DISOBEYING
MILITARY ORDERS, POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL PASSPORTS AND
PLOTING AGAINST ESTABLISHED REGIME. NONETHLESS, FAMILY
NAME IS NOT ONE TO INSPIRE LESS RADICALIZED YOUTH.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, CABINET, ELECTIONS, NEWSPAPERS, POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY LEADERS, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ATHENS07167
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740277-0591
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741084/aaaacucw.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUN 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 MAY 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <06 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>; WITHDRAWN <13 Jun 2005 by BoyleJA, PRIVACY>; RELEASED <21 JUN 2005 by powellba2>; APPROVED <21 JUN 2005 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CENTER UNION TO SEEK POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS
TAGS: PINT, GR, (MAVROS, GEORGE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005